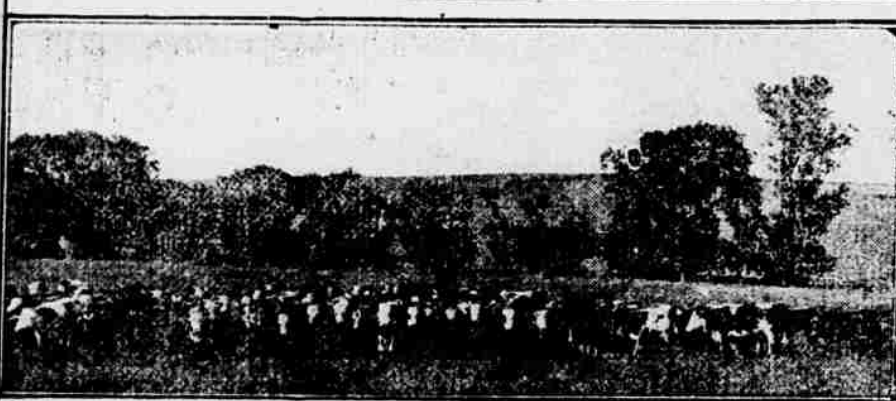


DAVID RANKIN OF TARKIO IS THE WORLD'S GREATEST FARMER.

Missouri Agriculturist, Proprietor of 23,000 Acres of Rich Soil, Is the Largest Individual Land Owner—How He Cultivates This Vast Tract—Industry, Perseverance and System the Secret of His Wonderful Success—He Will Be Eighty Years Old Next May, but He Toils With the Enthusiasm of Youth.



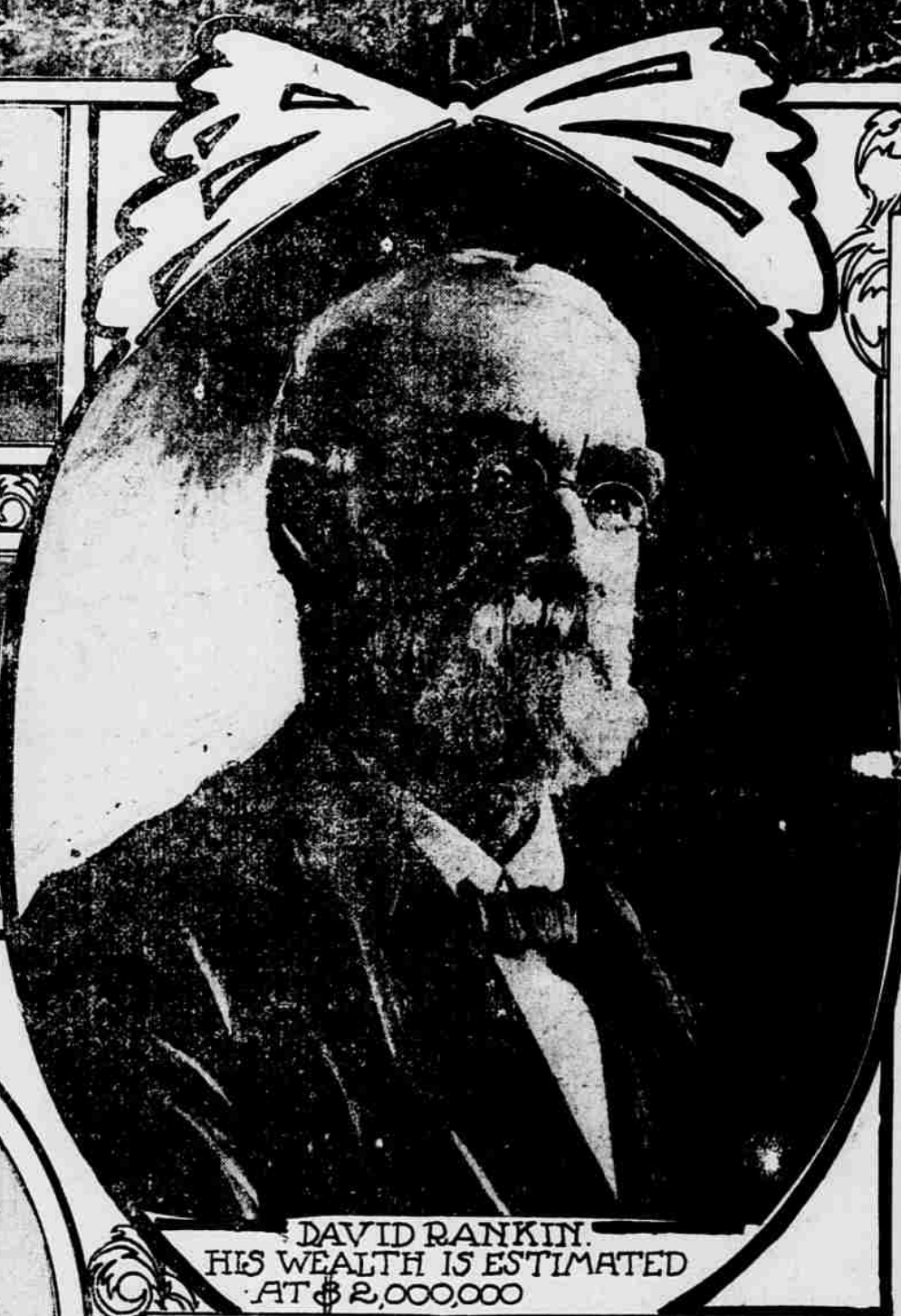
CORN CUTTING AND BINDING ON RANCH FIVE.



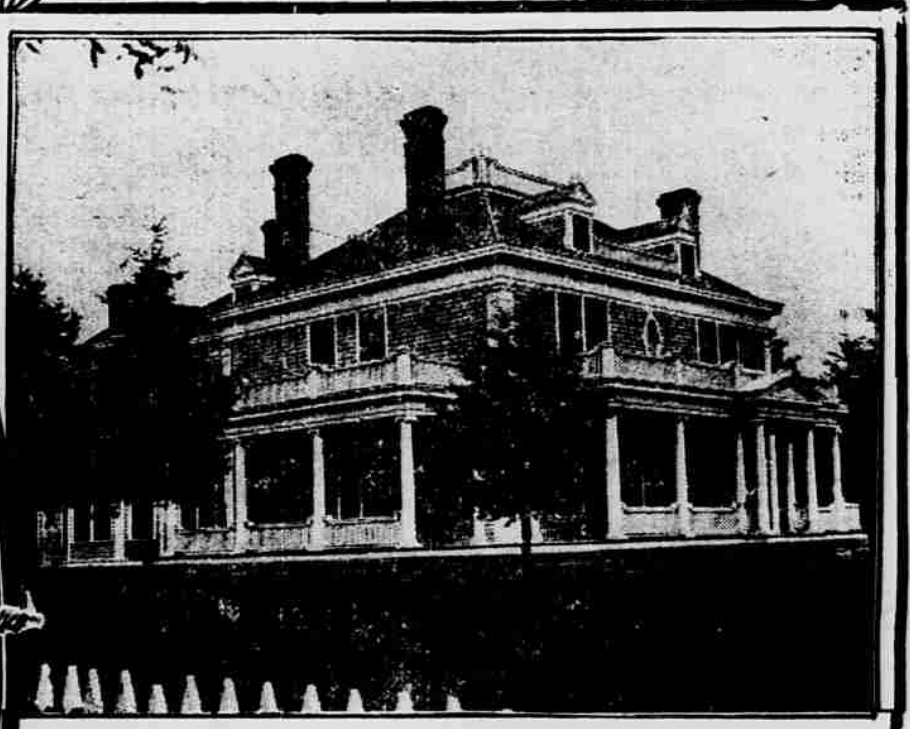
DRIVING UP A BUNCH OF CATTLE FOR SHIPMENT.



TWENTY FOUR THREE HORSE CULTIVATORS WORKING ON RANCH 12.



DAVID RANKIN. HIS WEALTH IS ESTIMATED AT \$2,000,000.



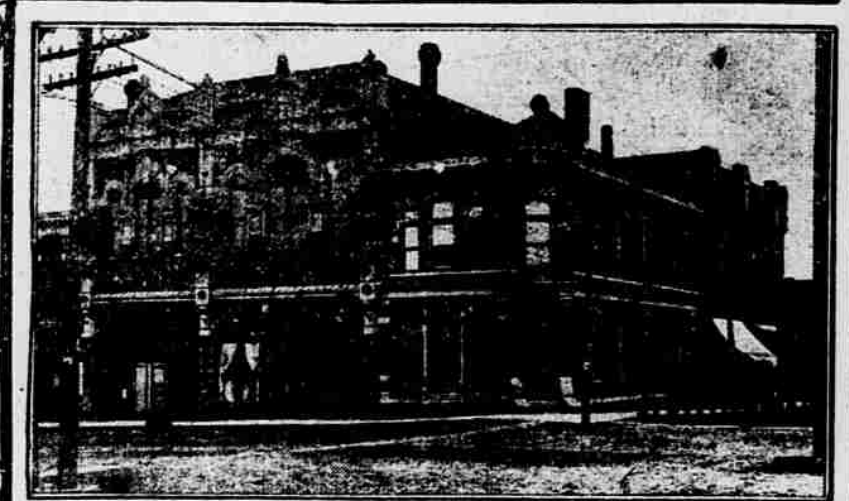
THE HOME PLACE OF DAVID RANKIN ON RANCH 12.



VIEW FROM TARKIO COLLEGE OVERLOOKING RANCH 12.



MAIN BUILDING OF TARKIO COLLEGE, TO WHICH MR. RANKIN HAS GIVEN \$200,000.



BUSINESS BLOCK IN TARKIO BUILT BY MR. RANKIN.

David Rankin, whose wealth is estimated at \$2,000,000, was once a poor laborer. His first possession was a yoke of oxen. More than 700 head of horses and mules are now required in the cultivation of his land. His property is divided into fourteen ranches, which he oversees in person. His gifts to Tarkio College approximate \$200,000. Tarkio, the town he made famous, is one of the most progressive communities in the State.

It was a glad time for the residents of Tarkio, Atchison County, Mo., last Sunday morning. The mercury in the thermometers had crawled past the century mark and the corn on the 23,000 acres of magnificent Missouri bottom land, belonging to David Rankin, the unowned king of American farmers, was fairly cracking as it crept nearer and nearer to maturity. Corn makes David Rankin what he is and David Rankin makes Tarkio what it is, one of the handsomest and most progressive of Missouri cities, and it was but natural that man, woman and child should hesitate on the way to the half dozen churches and after wiping the perspiration from the brow remark: "It's a great day for the corn, anyhow."

On the porch of the leading hotel prominent citizens gathered during the day to

refreshing showers of the night before was brought up. SATISFIED WITH THEIR LOT IN LIFE. The dash of rain followed by the rise in the temperature, which meant thousands upon thousands of dollars to the community, was the absorbing element in the conversation, and so these good people of Tarkio went to church with absolute equanimity, and after the Sunday dinner the men folks sat around in shirt sleeves in the broiling sun, and as they smoked their Sunday afternoon pipes were thoroughly satisfied with their lot in life.

As for David Rankin, the absolutely unconventional, thoroughly American and most typical millionaire corn king, he had worked his ninety-six hours during the week just ended, and he was spending his Sabbath day as he has spent it for most of the eighty years of his life.

With not a wheel turning on any one of his fourteen ranches, and with none of his men doing that but which absolute necessity required, he had doubtless returned thanks at the regular morning devotions for the gratifying showers, which meant so much to his thousands of acres. In his accustomed pew at the United Presbyterian Church he had attended the usual church services, and, while his neighbors rejoiced in the weather conditions, he remained quietly at his splendid suburban home, just outside Tarkio, and between naps communed with himself as to the

results which a combination of work and good health will effect. On the Sunday in question prospects were never brighter for a "bumper" corn crop in the Northwestern Missouri corn country. The stand is good, weather conditions have been generally favorable and are improving every day, and the outlook is most satisfactory. David Rankin, who has had a good yield when everybody else has reported a failure, is practically on "easy street," and barring the danger of frost is assured that his half million bushels of corn will be safely in the cribs at the appointed time.

PACKING-HOUSE STRIKE BOTHERS HIM. The only thing that bothers this Napoleon of farmers just now is the strike of the employees of the packing-houses. They have caused him a lot of difficulty in getting his train loads of fattened stock to the market. Instead of St. Joseph, Omaha and Chicago, he has been obliged to seek other markets, and now Buffalo and other points as far away have been the destination of the shipments which have left his ranches within the last few weeks. The corn prospect has ceased to be a trouble to him, and were it not for the strike situation he would be at peace with all the world.

When David Rankin first came to Missouri Tarkio was hardly on the map. Indeed, there hangs on the walls of the First National Bank, a sectional map of

Atchison County, published in 1872. There is a half section here and there marked with the name of David Rankin, but no townsite is marked for Tarkio, and it has attained its present rank and standing as one of the progressive and up-to-date towns of the State since Mr. Rankin has been a resident within the boundaries of the county.

The career of this remarkable farmer is stranger than fiction, and, at that, is but the story of unremitting toil and labor and the ability to grasp opportunities as they came within reach. When he talks with his Democratic neighbors, with whom he delights to argue, Mr. Rankin attributes his success to the Democratic party, but he gets back to the administration of Andrew Jackson and the financial conditions which prevailed at that time before he completes his line of reasoning.

"The Democratic party is the greatest educator on earth," is the pet phrase of "D. R." as he is colloquially termed by the populace of the neighborhood. "It made me what I am, and if it hadn't been for Andy Jackson and his financial foolishness I might be at this minute drifting around the hills of Pennsylvania, or somewhere in that locality." And then he launches into a story of his early career, which, for sheer force of character and the survival of the fittest, has few parallels.

David Rankin's parents were of Scotch and German ancestry, and at the time of

the birth of their son were residents of Sullivan County, Ind. On May 28, 1825, David Rankin was born. With his parents he moved to Henderson County, Ill., in 1838, and here he had his first struggles with fate. Henderson County is one of the western tier of counties of the State, and borders on the Mississippi River, Burlington, Ia., being the nearest city of importance. Shortly after the family reached this section of the country began the trials and tribulations which are attributed to the Jackson administration. The head of the house became reduced by stress of circumstances to next door to poverty. Money was unknown, and the only method of exchange was the barter of articles of common use. Bread was rarely obtainable, and Mr. Rankin relates that the finest piece of bread he ever ate was made from wheat which was ground in the family coffee mill.

HOW HE GOT HIS START IN LIFE. The family reached the point where the Constable's notice was tacked on the door and David's nature revolted. By strenuous efforts he, with his brother, succeeded in postponing the sale and finally redeemed the property, and this was his start in life. With his brother he decided to go into business on his own hook and by working by the day the two managed to secure a yoke of oxen. With this yoke they went to work for neighbors and assisted in clearing off the bottom land surrounding Okawaka, and made thereby the first money which either ever possessed.

Land was cheap in the Mississippi Bottoms at that time, and eventually, as their capital increased dollar by dollar, David was enabled to purchase a few acres. By helping his neighbors and getting parcels of land in exchange for labor, his possessions increased, and it was but a few years until he had enough land cleared which kept him busy tending for himself. By the closest attention to business and

by taking advantage of every opportunity which came along, his property gradually increased and became more valuable as the adjacent country was cleared, and railroads were projected. At the beginning of the war he was known as a man of means through Western Illinois, and at the end of the war his small fortune had doubled.

It was in the early '50s that he entered politics in Illinois, and as the candidate of the Republican party was elected to the Illinois House of Representatives, his personal popularity causing him to run far ahead of his companions on the ticket. Twice again he was elected by increased majorities.

During his term of office as a legislator his personal character was assailed for perhaps the only time. Political enemies within his own party were responsible for the store that his vote on a certain measure before the Legislature was influenced by his holdings of railway stock, which would be affected by the passage of the bill.

His constituency was greatly excited by the report, and his strenuous denial and mainly stand in the matter had much to do in forming the high opinion of his personal character which is held by those who know him.

MEMBER OF ILLINOIS INVESTIGATING COMMITTEE. Shortly after this episode he was named as a member of a committee to investigate charges which had been made with regard to the management of the Penitentiary at Joliet, at that time controlled by his own party. One of the party managers approached him at Springfield and remonstrated that he was going into the matter entirely too thoroughly. Rankin replied that in the investigation he knew neither friend or party, and that he was going to investigate the affair from top to bottom. A few days later he was the victim of a personal assault, on account of his stand, and the incident lives to this